

Stuff to Know

The Committee

The development of a statewide summer reading program for young adults and the creation of this manual would not have been possible without the effort and commitment of the dedicated librarians who formed the planning committee.

They serve as youth advocates within their libraries and communities. They brought to the program a commitment to providing library services to young adults, their belief that books, reading and literacy make a powerful impact on the lives of teens, and their conviction that community libraries and librarians can serve as a positive forces against at-risk behaviors.

The Teen Summer Reading Program (TSRP) Committee initially met in November 1998 to determine the format, scope and structure of a statewide summer reading program for young adults. Numerous meetings to develop the manual, determine the focus of the art, select an artist and discuss marketing the project followed.

The committee saw the program not only as a means of promoting books and reading to young adults, but also as an avenue to advocate to public librarians the value of providing and improving young adult services. From this conviction came the committee's decision to conduct statewide Trade Secrets Workshops that would provide an introduction to the methods and practices of serving teens.

The committee does not see the dissemination of this manual as the end of their service. Instead, it is a beginning – a seed from which services to young adult Missourians will grow. And while it will be your library's commitment to serving youth in your community that will ultimately determine success, the members of TSRP are available to help you struggle through the growing years. A directory providing the names and contact information for members of the Teen Summer Reading Program Committee is available in the appendix. Don't hesitate to contact any of them for advice, ideas, or cheers for your successes!

Definition of Young Adults

For the purpose of developing this program, the committee defined young adults as youth ages 12 to 18. However, your knowledge of your community, your schools, and your library will help you determine the ages to which you will target the teen summer program. Whatever you do, make sure you take the effort to define children and young adults. They are not the same population, and they do not want to be treated as such. Your efforts to recognize the young adults and serve them accordingly will be worth it!

The Manual – What It Is, What It Isn't

This manual is a tool to provide you with ideas for planning, conducting and evaluating a summer reading program for youth in your community. It isn't a cookbook. You will find no "recipes" that tell you the ideal, or one-and-only-way to plan and conduct your local program. It provides basic information to get any library – large or small, rich or poor, urban or rural – on the road to providing better service to the young adults in their community.

The manual is also not an annual publication. Unlike the planning manual for the statewide children's summer reading program, a new teen summer reading program manual will not be disseminated each year. Instead, new information, ideas for programs, resources, collection development or promotion may be issued to update or expand the manual. We encourage you to store it in a three ring binder and add to it as necessary.

The only truly successful teen summer reading programs are teen driven – you may provide the spark, the expertise, the knowledge, space and supervision, but only through the involvement of your teens will the program grow and succeed.

Lastly, do not go into the development of a summer reading program for teens thinking it is an annual, isolated event. Once you have built an attractive collection for teens, provided them with a space of their own (even if it's just a paperback rack), and let them know you care about them, they will continue to come. Not in droves, not in the numbers preschoolers come. But they *will* come, and they *will* have expectations. You are opening a door to communication and building a community. Be prepared to enjoy it for all it's worth!!!



